

Visa Application Fee Increase

May 25, 2010

Summary

On June 4, the United States will increase the nonimmigrant visa application fee. The fee for most categories, including tourist and business visitor visas (B1/B2) and student and exchange visitor visas (F, M and J), will rise from the current \$131 to \$140. The fee will rise more for other categories which require more work to process. These categories and the new fees are as follows:

H (temporary workers and trainees)	\$150
L (intracompany transferees)	\$150
O (aliens with extraordinary ability)	\$150
P (athletes, artists and entertainers)	\$150
Q (international cultural exchange visitors)	\$150
R (religious workers)	\$150
Treaty Traders and Investors (E visas)	\$390
Fiancées/Fiancés (K visas)	\$350

Why is the United States increasing the basic nonimmigrant visa application fee to \$140 from its current amount of \$131?

We are required by law to recover the cost of processing nonimmigrant visas through the collection of the application fee. A Cost of Service Study, conducted by an independent contractor, determined that the cost of accepting, adjudicating, and issuing nonimmigrant visas is more than \$131. Among the factors raising our costs since the fee was last revised in 2008 are new security-related requirements, new IT systems, and a new mandate from Congress to charge nonimmigrant visa applicants \$1 to support programs to combat trafficking in persons.

When do the new processing fees go into effect?

The new fees will go into effect on June 4, 2010. All applicants with interview appointments on or after that date must pay the new fee.

What if I already paid my fee for an appointment after June 4th?

Applicants will have to pay the fee in effect on the day of their interview appointment, regardless of when they pay. Our fee collection contractor, Alliance Bank, will begin to collect the new fees as soon as possible. But applicants who

have paid the old fee of \$131 will be able to pay the difference when they come to the Embassy for their interviews. If you have paid your fee at Alliance Bank, you will not need to return to the bank to pay the additional fee, but you should bring enough money to your interview (ringgit or dollars – cash only) to pay the additional fee.

Why is the United States establishing new, higher fees for certain types of nonimmigrant visas which previously cost \$131, the same as all other nonimmigrant visas?

The Cost of Service Study showed that certain categories of nonimmigrant visas are more complicated and require more in-depth consideration, such as review of extensive documentation and a more in-depth interview, than other categories, such as tourists. Therefore, those categories of visas have higher unit costs and applicants for these visas should pay more.

Will this fee increase discourage people from traveling to the United States?

Past increases in nonimmigrant visa fees did not negatively impact the number of applications received worldwide. We are aware that this fee increase may suppress the demand for nonimmigrant visas in some countries. However, the cost is still small compared to the cost of round-trip airfare from most countries to the United States. Most visas issued worldwide are tourist visas with a validity of ten years, meaning the bearer can apply for admission to the United States any time during that ten-year period.

Can I comment on these fees?

The Department of State has published additional data from the Cost of Service Study at <http://www.regulations.gov/search/Regs/home.html#documentDetail?R=0900006480aee4e6>, and will accept public comments on that data for 60 days (until July 19, 2010). The public may comment in any of the ways laid out in the rule published on www.regulations.gov. Later this summer, the Department will review and consider any comments received from the public and publish a final rule.